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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9454
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0854
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0482
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 0331
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0345
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1595
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0227
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0619
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 1474
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0078
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SUBJECT: PRESERVING LEBANESE PM SINIORA'S GOVERNMENT

REF: STATE 172274

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson - Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (S/NF) Ambassador reviewed U.S. concerns about Syrian plans to undermine the Siniora government with Turkish PM/FM foreign policy advisor Davutoglu on October 17. He reminded Davutoglu of the exchange about Syria and Lebanon during PM Erdogan's meeting with the President on October 2. The two leaders had strongly agreed on the importance of supporting the Siniora government, and the President had pointed to Lebanon as a test case where Asad could show his real intentions. In conveying reftel talking points, Ambassador urged that Turkey use its contacts with Damascus strongly to discourage actions that will weaken Siniora, further destabilize Lebanon, and further isolate Syria, from which bad consequences will flow.

¶2. (S/NF) Davutoglu expressed some alarm about these reported Syrian intentions, but indicated Turkey will see what it can do. He had a similar conversation a few days earlier with the German chancellor's national security advisor, Christoph Heusgen, though it was more directed at using Turkish influence to secure the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon. The German reportedly suggested a joint approach to Damascus, and Turkey is considering this. Davutoglu also noted that he had spoken by telephone a few hours earlier with Siniora foreign affairs advisor Mohammad Chatah, who had not mentioned anything like what the U.S. information reported. Davutoglu concluded by indicating that Turkey will do what it can to warn off the Syrians and expressed interest in further information that might be helpful.

¶3. (S/NF) COMMENT: If Siniora has any information along the lines described in reftel, it would be helpful for him or Chatah also to take up their concerns with Ankara to underscore their seriousness and perhaps further engender Turkish action. Ambassador will check back with Davutoglu in coming days to see what further Turkey may have in the works.

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